



Join Us In Measuring Progress

A Monthly
Assessment Newsletter
November/December 2003

Assessment for Learning

The Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS)

Information on the Montana
Comprehensive Assessment System,
Phases 1 and 2



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	MontCAS, Phase 1: The Iowa Tests	MontCAS, Phase 2: The Montana CRT
2004 Testing Window	March 8 - 26, 2004	March 29 - April 16, 2004
2004 Alternate Assessment Window	March 8 - 26, 2004	February 18 - April 16, 2004
Grades tested	4, 8, 11	4, 8, 10
Subjects tested	Reading, language arts, math, social studies, science	Reading and math
Types of item	Multiple Choice	Multiple choice, short answer in math, constructed response
Calculator Use	By IEP/504/LEP plans only	For all students on some portions of the test
Accommodations	By IEP/504/LEP plans only Accommodations are not coded.	For all students whose current classroom plan requires the accommodation. Schools will code accommodations used.
Alternate Assessment	Alternate Assessment Scales and Assessment Handbook updated in 2002	Policy is under consideration.
Marking answer documents	Bar code labels can be ordered at district expense from Riverside. Contact: Todd Hausman (800) 323-9540 x 7713 Todd_Hausman@hmco.com	Preprinting of answer documents by Measured Progress, Inc. as part of contract—optional in 2004 for districts. More information is in the article on preslugged answer documents in this edition of <i>JUMP</i> .
Training for Iowa and CRT Test Administration: Intended for system and school test coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, February 12 • 8:30 am - 3:00 pm • Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Glendive, Glasgow, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Libby, Missoula, Pablo, and Sidney • Registration and material links and information in January <i>JUMP</i> 	
Training for Alternate Assessment for the Iowa Tests and the CRT: Intended for special education directors and special education teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, February 13 • 8:30 am - 3:00 pm • Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Glendive, Glasgow, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Libby, Missoula, Pablo, and Sidney • Registration and material links and information in January <i>JUMP</i> 	

Coding of Ethnicity for Spring 2004 Statewide Testing

For both MontCAS Phases 1 and 2, ethnicity coding will be limited to one of the following:

- American Indian or Alaska Native;
- Asian;
- Black or African American;
- Hispanic;
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; or
- White.

These categories are consistent with the Fall Enrollment MAEFAIRS Count. The “Other” category will not be used.

Release of Statewide Test Results

The preliminary process and the timeline for statewide release of 2004 test results for MontCAS, Phases 1 and 2, the NRT and the CRT, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/Assessment/PrelimTimeline.pdf>.



Student Participation in Statewide Testing

All students enrolled in accredited Montana schools in grades 4, 8, and 11 are required to take MontCAS, Phase 1—*ITBS* at grades 4 and 8 and the *ITED* at grade 11—and MontCAS, Phase 2, the criterion-referenced test (CRT) at grades 4, 8, and 10.

This includes the following groups of students:

- Students identified as having disabilities, including Section 504 students, must be tested according to the requirements established by their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plan.
- Students who have been identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or who have been instructed in English for three or more years must take The Iowa Tests (ARM 10.56.101). This includes foreign exchange students who are required to participate, however, their scores will not be calculated into overall scores at any level.
- Part-time students: A school district must include, in the statewide student assessment, any student, in the grades designated for assessment, who is enrolled in the district for 180 hours or more for the school year and has not reached the age of 19.

MontCAS, Phase 1

Survey Regarding the Future of the NRT Testing Requirement

For three years now, the state Board of Public Education has required that Montana students in grades 4, 8, and 11 take The Iowa Tests, which are “norm-referenced” tests. More recently, President Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act requires states to use a “criterion-referenced” test to measure student performance. Beginning in the spring 2004, Montana’s 4th, 8th and 10th grade students will take a criterion-referenced test (CRT) designed by Measured Progress, Inc. The administration of the criterion-referenced test is a condition of receiving federal education dollars.

These new federal testing requirements have prompted the Board of Public Education (BPE) and the OPI to examine the existing state assessment requirement. The OPI has designed a survey to learn what Montana school officials think should happen to the norm-referenced test after the spring 2004 administration.

The Office of Public Instruction mailed a letter to each school system explaining the survey and provided a UserID and Password to access the survey. State Superintendent Linda McCulloch also sent a letter to every school board chair notifying them of the survey and encouraging them to discuss the school system’s survey response with school administrators.

The following is the timeline for the survey.

December 4, 2003	Survey is posted at http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Assessment
December 19, 2003	Deadline for completing survey
January to March 2004	BPE Task Force on Assessment analyzes survey results
March 11-12, 2004	Recommendation made at BPE Meeting

MontCAS, Phase 2

Preparing for the CRT

- Resources to assist teachers and administrators prepare for the administration of the criterion-referenced test in spring 2004 are available online in a red box at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/assessment/index.html>.
- Questions asked during and after the "Preparing the CRT" videoconference are answered and posted in the red box or at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/CRTQ&A.pdf>
- In addition, video tapes of the "Preparing for the CRT" videoconference are available for checkout through the Office of Public Instruction Resource Center. Contact Raelen Williard, rwilliard@state.mt.us or (406) 444-2082.

Workshop Videos: Teacher as Assessor and Examining Student Work

Videotapes of workshops developed and presented by Measured Progress ("Teacher as Assessor," spring 2003, and "Examining Student Work," October 2003) are available for checkout through the Office of Public Instruction Resource Center. OPI Contact: Raelen Williard, rwilliard@state.mt.us or (406) 444-2082.

Answer Documents for the Criterion-Referenced Test

Measured Progress will preprint (preslug) answer documents with student information for systems that provide the information to Measured Progress. The following information should be from the system records for the student: Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial, Date of Birth, Grade in School, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Optional student identification number, School.

Test coordinators will receive instructions and more information in a memo from Measured Progress by December 11, 2003.

This is an optional service for 2004 provided by Measured Progress. There is no charge.

Measured Progress Opens Help Desk

For information on materials or deadlines, please call 1 (888) 792-2741. For information on policy, please contact Judy Snow at the Office of Public Instruction. Contact information can be found below.

The Alternate Assessment for the Criterion-Referenced Test

The alternate assessments for MontCAS, Phase 1, The Iowa Tests, and MontCAS, Phase 2, the criterion-referenced tests (CRT), are substantially different.

The Iowa Test alternate assessment is a checklist completed by the teacher(s) most familiar with the student. The criterion-referenced test alternate assessment is a series of tasks that a student performs. The teacher uses a rubric to rate the student's performance and collects evidence of the student's performance. The CRT alternate assessment is more time-consuming to administer than the alternate assessment scale; therefore, the CRT alternate assessment testing window (February 18 - April 16, 2004) is about five weeks longer than the CRT window (March 29 - April 16, 2004).

The CRT does not have strict time limits. According to the testing contractor, Measured Progress, Inc. this will benefit many students who struggle with the time constraints of a norm-referenced test.

Because of the significant differences between the MontCAS Phase 1 and Phase 2 alternates, IEP, 504, and LEP teams may want to review student plans and reconvene some teams to update information about how a student will participate in the assessments. A team may specify the alternate assessments for both or either of the tests in any or all of the subject areas. Since all students are required to participate in both MontCAS, Phases 1 and 2, alternate assessment decisions for each are necessary.

Training for the administration of the alternate assessment for both MontCAS Phase 1 and Phase 2 is by videoconference on February 13, 2004. Systems and schools are encouraged to send special education directors and special education teachers who have students in grades 4, 8, and 11 (for Phase 1) and/or 4, 8, and 10 (for Phase 2) who are likely to need an alternate assessment. Preliminary information about the training is in the chart comparing MontCAS Phases 1 and 2 on page 1 of this newsletter. Specific details, registration, and conference materials will be in the January *JUMP*.

For further information, contact:
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